



Wedded to the Chakras

Kavita Ramdya
offers seven yoga poses
for the soon-to-be bride
Illustration: Uttam Ghosh

In the weeks leading up to your wedding, there will be a series of items to cross off your things to do list. Confirming the flowers with your florist, registering a marriage license, picking up the party favours are just some of the errands — never mind managing family politics, coordinating travel plans for last-minute guests and, of course, scheduling in quality time with your fiancé who is both awed and overwhelmed by your military-style approach to planning your nuptials.

But what about you?

You've probably had a best friend or cousin, colleague or book club pal complain about a headache that won't go away, a recurring stomach ache, or feeling low on energy in the weeks leading up to their Big Day. No one said planning a wedding would be easy. But where was the warning that it could potentially affect your health?!

Luckily enough, ancient civilizations like India managed stress in a way which is effective and respected by physicians and scientists in both the East and West. Chakras are centers of energy throughout our bodies which influence the organs surrounding them. There are seven major chakras; by practicing specific floor yoga poses we can massage and re-energize these essential chakras to maintain our health during stressful times. Combine these floor yoga poses into a twenty-minute daily morning routine, and reinvigorate your body to combat exhaustion, aches and pains. And it's a great way to keep fit and agile in time for your debut as a bride!!

Muladhara chakra or the base of the spinal cord:

Sit in an easy cross-legged position on the floor.

Siddhasana is a simple pose yet conducive to releasing stress because of its meditative quality. Sit Indian style and place your hands on your knees so your thumb and index fingers touch and the palms of your hands are facing the ceiling. Hold your back erect so that your spine runs straight: close your eyes and dedicate your practice to someone in need— a sick relative, close friend going through a bad break-up, a family member who was recently laid off. Practice this meditative pose for thirty seconds and increase by an additional thirty seconds every day that you practice yoga in the weeks leading up to your wedding.

Swadhisthana or ovaries:

Place your palms and knees on the

floor so that you are in **Marjaryasana**, or the cat pose. Inhale through your nose while curling your back upwards towards the ceiling. Exhale slowly while bringing your back parallel to the ground. Repeat ten times.

Manipura or navel:

Pranayama is "the breathe." Practice **uddiyana bandha** by making sitting in an easy, cross-legged position on the floor and releasing short, rapid nose exhalations while simultaneously sucking in your stomach. These short exhalations will rid your body of toxins and stir an energy you won't believe was already inside you just waiting to be awakened!

Anahata or heart: Upward-facing dog, or **Urdhva Mukha Svanasana**, requires laying face down on the floor and placing your hands directly below your shoulders. Use your upper body to lift your torso. Look upwards at the ceiling in front of you and offer your heart to the sun. Hold for thirty seconds.

Vishuddha or throat and neck: Sarvangasana is the "supported shoulder stand". Lie on your back and let your hands lift your lower back, buttocks and legs so that the bottoms of your feet face the ceiling. Make sure your elbows and upper arms are supporting your lower body and breathe through your nose. Since you are upside down, your body now has the chance to re-direct its circulation of blood and your thyroid is more active as your throat is lightly compressed against your chest. Hold for two minutes.

Ajna or brow: Sit in **Balāsana**, or Child's Pose. Sit on bended knees and bring your forehead to the floor. Outstretch your arms behind you. Relax your body into the grown.

Sahasrar or top of the head:

Lie in **Savasana**, or corpse pose. Lie down on your back and allow your feet to fall to the sides and place your arms, outstretched, at a forty-five degree angle from your body. Close your eyes and mediate for on the word Om for 30 seconds, allowing your body to fully relax and restore itself upon completing your yoga routine.

Yoga won't ensure your wedding day is flawless. However, these seven floor yoga poses which are meant to target the seven chakras will most definitely eliminate your worries and pre-wedding jitters in the weeks leading up to your Big Day.

